

STATINTL

SEND JOHNSON ADVISER BUNDY TO VIET TODAY

BY PHILIP DODD

(Chicago Tribune Press Service)

Washington, Feb. 1 — President Johnson is sending McGeorge Bundy, his adviser on international security affairs, to Viet Nam to consult with American officials on the latest political upheavals in that country, the White House announced tonight.

George Reedy, Presidential press secretary, said the Bundy trip was not a crisis matter. He said it would take the place of one of the periodic Washington visits by Gen. Maxwell D. Taylor, American ambassador to Viet Nam.

Absent During Coup

The last time Taylor left his Saigon post—10 days ago when he visited neighboring Laos—Lt. Gen. Nguyen Khanh, Viet Nam's military strong man, staged the ninth in a series of coups that began in November, 1963.

Reedy said that Bundy would fly to Saigon tomorrow night, accompanied by state and defense department officials including Leonard Unger, deputy assistant secretary of state, and John T. McNaughton, assistant secretary of defense.

Asked if Bundy would consult with Vietnamese officials as well as American, Reedy said if such talks were held they would be coincidental.

The decision to send Bundy to

Saigon was made after a two-hour White House conference attended by Cyrus R. Vance, acting secretary of defense; Undersecretary of State George W. Ball; Gen. Earle G. Wheeler, chairman of the joint chiefs of staff; Bundy, and his brother, William F. Bundy, assistant secretary of state.

Talks with Council

This evening Johnson conferred with the national security council at the White House on the Bundy trip and other international matters including the House vote to bar foreign aid to Egypt.

In announcing the Bundy Trip, Reedy said that "in view of the situation, it is felt preferable for the ambassador [Taylor] to stay there and for Mr. Bundy to fly out and consult with him."

Taylor went to Saigon last July and returned to Washington for consultation in September and November.

Charges Nit-Picking

Reedy dismissed as "nit-picking" a reporter's question as to whether the Bundy trip could be interpreted as meaning the United States has little confidence in the stability of the present Saigon regime headed by Khanh.

Washington officials have said repeatedly that United States policy is to encourage the formation of a stable government in Saigon which has the backing of the people. The implication has been that the United States wants a civilian government.

But last week, a state department official insisted that the United States never had said it would not support a military government, as long as such a regime had the support of the people.

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